

Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan in Jammu District: A Critical Analysis

Dr. Kavita Suri*

*Associate Professor, Department of Lifelong Learning, University of Jammu

Abstract

Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan is a centrally sponsored integrated flagship scheme launched by the Central government for the universalization of elementary education with a specific time frame. The main thrust of SSA is on community participation, decentralized planning and better quality of education. It covers the entire country in a mission mode and was launched in India in the year 2001-2002 in collaboration with the state governments and local self governments. The programme aims to provide useful and relevant, elementary education to all children in the 6 to 14 age group. The scheme is also being implemented in Jammu and Kashmir, the border state of India which consists of three regions-Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh. SSA was launched in J&K in the year 2005.

The present study focuses on the impact of SSA in Jammu district of Jammu and Kashmir state. Jammu, one of the 22 districts of J&K, has been the winter capital of the state of Jammu and Kashmir for six months. It has four tehsils - Jammu, RS Pura, Akhnoor and Bishnah, 08 towns including one Municipal Corporation Jammu, 889 villages and 297 Panchyats, 08 CD Blocks and 14 educational zones. Most of Jammu district is spread over plains and some parts of it is hilly also. It is climatically very hot in summers and quite cold in winters. The entire area has a significant population. Besides, by virtue of being the seat of power for the government for six months, the district is in focus most of the times.

The present research paper aims at understanding the role played by SSA and other initiatives in improvement of quality education in Jammu district besides identifying the issues, problems and challenges to SSA in the district. The research paper also suggests some strategies for improving education in Jammu which could help in improvement in the quality of education at elementary stage.

Key words:- Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, Elementary Education, Quality Education, Jammu

1. Introduction

Jammu and Kashmir, the border state of India consists of three regions - Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh. Srinagar is J&K's summer capital while the city of Jammu is the winter capital. The State ranks 6th in area and 17th in population among the States and the Union Territories of India. J&K has 22 districts, 59 tehsils, 119 blocks, 3 municipalities, 54 towns and notified area committees, 6477 inhabited villages and 281 uninhabited villages. (MHRD, GOI)

Jammu, one of the 22 districts of J&K, is popularly known as "City of Temples". It has four tehsils of Jammu, RS Pura, Akhnoor and Bishnah, 08 towns including one Municipal Corporation Jammu, 889 villages and 297 Panchyats, 08 CD Blocks and 14 Educational Zones. Most of Jammu district is spread over plains and some parts of it is hilly also. It is climatically very hot in summers and quite cold in winters.

1.1 Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan

In the post-independence era, both the state and central governments kept education sector as one of their priority areas. Top priority has also been accorded in the National Policy on Education 1986 and Programme of Action 1992 for achieving the goals of Universal Elementary Education. A number of programmes / schemes were launched during last 64 years for Universalisation of elementary education.

Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan is a centrally sponsored integrated flagship scheme for universalization of elementary education. It covers the entire country in a mission mode and was launched in the year 2001-2002 in partnership with the state governments and local self governments. This flagship central scheme aims to provide useful and relevant, elementary education to all children in the 6 to 14 age group. The SSA which lays emphasis on bridging all gender and social category gaps at elementary education level with time bound objectives, is an initiative to universalize and improve quality of education through decentralized and context specific planning and a process based, time bound implementation strategy. SSA is not only a programme with its own targets, norms and processes but it is also an umbrella programme for other programmes like District Primary Education Programme (DPEP), Lok Jumbish, Operational Blackboard, etc. (Human Resource Development 2000).

In Jammu and Kashmir also, the education sector is one of the priority areas for the government. SSA was launched in entire J&K in 2005. The researcher sought to study the impact of SSA on Jammu district which has been the winter capital of the state of Jammu and Kashmir for six months. The area has a significant population. Besides, by virtue of being the seat of power for the government for six months, the district is in focus most of the times. Thus the researcher thought about studying the impact of SSA on district Jammu which could throw light on the quality dimensions of elementary

education in the district. It would thus help the field level functionaries of SSA to devise ways and means for recognizing classroom interaction, using suitable evaluation techniques and developing harmonious relationships with parents and community thereby leading to improvement in the quality of education at elementary stage.

2. Objectives of the Present Study

- a. To study the literacy levels in Jammu district in J& K.
- b. To understand the role played by SSA and other initiatives in improvement of quality education in Jammu district
- c. To identify the issues, problems and challenges to SSA in Jammu district in J&K
- d. To examine the educational implications of SSA.
- e. To suggest strategies for improving education in Jammu

3. Methodology

The data for the present study was taken from both primary and secondary sources in Jammu district. The primary sources have been the office of chief education officer, Jammu, various zonal education officers in Jammu, Director school Education, Jammu, Office of State Project Director SSA, J&K, teachers, Village education committee members etc. The researcher's own department - Department of Lifelong Learning - at the University of Jammu has closely been associated with SSA as the Monitoring Institution (MI) of this programme in Jammu province and the researcher has been part of the monitoring teams which had been going in the field in the districts for evaluation of the SSA scheme in the past few years.

A detailed questionnaire was used for primary sources who were contacted for the present study. Besides, the secondary sources including various government documents, reports, books, research papers in journals, J&K economic surveys, magazines and periodicals have been consulted thoroughly for the present study.

4. Limitations of the study

The present study which is based on both primary and secondary sources could have been

broadened by including more information and data regarding literacy levels and its various parameters in Jammu district.

Table 1.1: Jammu District: A profile

Blocks	08
Zones	14
Clusters	120
Villages	889
Total Habitations	1800
PRIMARY SECTION	
Eligible School less habitations for PS	10
Government Schools having Primary Sec	1470
Govt. Aided Schools	—
Sanctioned Teachers Posts	3188
Working Teachers	2924
Govt. Aided Teachers	
Total Child Population (6-11)	159797
Total Enrolment All Communities DISE 2009-10	158659
Total Enrolment (Govt. + Govt. Aided)	40161
Total Boys Enrolment (Govt.)	20358
Total Girls Enrolment (Govt.)	19803
SC Boys Enrolment (Govt.)	8942
SC Girls Enrolment (Govt.)	8970
ST Boys Enrolment (Govt.)	3267
ST Girls Enrolment (Govt.)	3110
Out of School Children (6-11)	241
Children with Special needs (Enrolled)	
UPPER PRIMARY SECTION	
Eligible School less habitations for UPS	15
Government Upper Primary Schools (including HS / HSS with elementary classes)	533
Govt. Aided Schools	—
Sanctioned Teachers Posts	3766
Working Teachers	2742

Govt. Aided Teachers	—
Total Child Population (11-14)	90545
Total Enrolment All Communities DISE 2010-11	90413
Total Enrolment Govt.	26782
Total Boys Enrolment (Govt.)	13436
Total Girls Enrolment (Govt.)	13346
SC Boys Enrolment (Govt.)	6218
SC Girls Enrolment (Govt.)	6471
ST Boys Enrolment (Govt.)	1657
ST Girls Enrolment (Govt.)	1339
Out of School Children	99
Children with Special needs (Enrolled)	-

Table 1.2: Literacy Rate of Jammu District

Sex	Census 2001	Census 2011	Net gain
Male	84.8	89.08	4.29
Female	69.26	77.13	7.87
Total	77.56	83.5	5.9

The total population of Jammu district, as per Census 2011, is 1529958 which include 813821 males and 716137 females. Jammu contributes 12.2 % of population to the entire population of the state of Jammu and Kashmir. J&K has a 67 percent literacy rate (76 among males and 56 among females). The literacy rate in Jammu district in 2001 Census was 77.56 per cent while in Census 2011, it is 83.5 per cent. There has been a net gain of 5.9 % in the past one decade.

Jammu district has 14 educational zones. All the zones are different from each other. Few zones fall in extremely difficult areas while few are in plain areas. Few are close to the International Border while many are situated close to the Line of Control with Pakistan. Akhnoor zone starts from the banks of River Chenab and comprises mostly of plain area with good road connectivity except two schools of cluster Rehani and Kotli Tanda. A part of zone is irrigated and the rest is

Kandi belt. Arnia zone is located on the International Border with Pakistan. Majority of the area of Bhalwal Zone is Kandi area; its village Rabta towards the north touches the Reasi District. It has SC, ST and mobile population. The connectivity through roads is thin and people have to walk a lot on foot. The areas like Rabta, Showa, Ranjan, Jandiyal Bhagani, Seri Panditan and Ghaink are hilly and have scattered population. Bishnah zone is inhabited by rural as well as semi urban population. Chowki Choura zone is one of the remotest, backward and hilly zones in the District. Its boundary touches with the boundary of Reasi district in one corner and Rajouri district on another side, involving actual line of control in Beri Pattan Sector. The interior areas of the zone do not have road connectivity. The population of the zone is thin and scattered. Dansal zone is totally hilly and having Scattered

Table 1.3: Data on Literacy Rates (6-14)

Zone	All community			SC			ST		
	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T
Akhnoor	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	00.00
Arnia	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	00.00
Bhalwal	99.23	99.90	99.52	99.91	99.86	99.88	99.80	100.00	99.89
Bishnah	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	00.00
Chowki Choura	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	00.00
Dansal	98.94	98.85	98.90	100.00	100.00	100.00	95.48	94.89	95.21
Gandhi Nagar	97.81	97.81	97.81	97.22	97.91	97.54	99.32	99.39	99.35
Jammu	99.12	100.00	99.51	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	00.00
Jourian	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	00.00
Khour	99.95	99.97	99.96	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	00.00
Marh	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	00.00
Miran Sahib	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	00.00
R.S. Pura	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	00.00
Satwari	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	00.00

Source: *Census 2001***Table 1.4: Revenue Blocks, Panchyats and Educational Zones of Jammu District**

S.No	Educational Zone	No of Clusters
1.	Akhnoor	08
2.	Arnia	08
3.	Bhalwal	08
4.	Bishnah	08
5.	Chouki Choura	10
6.	Dansal	10
7.	Gandhi Nagar	08
8.	Jammu	08
9.	Jourian	08
10.	Khour	08
11.	Marh	08
12.	Miran Sahib	08
13.	R.S.Pura	08
14.	Satwari	08

Population of ST and SC Population. The zone also has a mobile population of ST (Gujjars and Bakerwals). Gandhi Nagar zone has remote areas like Berga, Chilla, Panjowa, Sarna, Surinsar and has 40 % hilly areas. Jammu zone is mostly urban populated and a part of it is rural. It is thickly populated having slum areas. New Primary Schools are functioning in most of the slums. Enrolment in government institutions is less as compared to private institutions due to lack of basic learning conditions at Primary and Upper Primary level. Jourian zone is partly hilly and extends up to Line of Control and IB border with Pakistan. Khour zone is partly hilly and extends up to LoC with Pakistan. Some habitations in the Kandi / hilly areas are lacking the schooling facility for children. Educational zones of Bhalwal, Satwari, Akhnoor and Jammu surround Marh zone. A part of this zone stretches up to international Border and few schools here are located on the border. Miran Sahib zone comprises of purely rural population. The inhabitants are mainly agriculturist and labour class. R. S. Pura zone comprises of rural and urban areas. Territorial limits of the zone extend to the international Border of India and Pakistan. Road connectivity is good and almost every school of the zone is connected through roads. Satwari zone includes Cantonment Area and area of National Airport, Jammu. Few parts of the zone touch with the International Border. Most of the area is plain and well connected by roads. (Census 2011, Government of India)

5. Issues, Findings and Discussion

Since the implementation of SSA in the district / zones, lot of improvement has taken place and efforts have been made to minimize dropouts and never-enrolled. However, there are various problems and issues which hamper the objectives of univeralization of elementary education. In Jammu district, access has been provided to the students with the opening of new 493 primary schools thereby enrolling maximum

number of out of school children but there are such areas where access is yet to be provided. There are still many areas in many zones where upper primary schooling facility is not available within 3 Kilometers as specified under SSA.

The Monitoring Institutions (MIs), while monitoring the progress of SSA in Jammu district, have come across many issues. There were no separate toilets for boys and girls in most of the schools visited by MIs due to which enrolment and presence of the girl children in the school especially adolescent girls is affected. These schools already had poor sanitary conditions due to lack of running water supply in toilets. Sixty percent of the school did not have the separate facility where as in only 40% of the schools there was a separate provision of toilets for boys and girls. Most of the schools monitored by the MI did not have any training programme but refresher's course for untrained teachers in the schools.

Another major issue was regarding the community participation for school management and monitoring. Efforts are on to strengthen Village Education Committees (VECs) but there are many problems. In the field visits of the MI in the district, it was found that 70% of the SMCs (School monitoring committee) or VECs members were not familiar with the roles and responsibilities as notified by the state government leading to the weaker participation of the members in the functioning of the schools. The SMC members were also not provided with training with regard to the school development plan in the district which could be the reason for the lack of awareness about their roles and responsibilities. Most of the schools would conduct monthly SMC meetings while few schools convened it either quarterly or half yearly. Poor monitoring was seen in teachers and student attendance. The women members enlisted in these associations were very few.

With regard to infrastructure, the accommodation in primary schools is a two

room set with veranda in which it is not possible to teach five classes in mono grade and multi grade situations. In most of the schools, one room is being used as store for stock items and food grains for Mid Day Meals and another for office use. Teacher has to take the classes in winter and summer in the rooms already being used for the said purpose. The lack of infrastructure and accommodation is the main hurdle in creating conducive and friendly teaching-learning environment in the school. The district has 28 schools which needs MS buildings on account of equal number with insufficient accommodation. Many of the Primary Schools in the District are functioning in single classroom accommodation. Even some Upper Primary Schools are functioning in single classroom accommodation. (Annual Work Plan and Budget of SSA Jammu District 2011-2012).

There are many issues in achieving quality education. Text Books are being provided under SSA from 3rd to 8th. But the books are not supplied at the beginning of the session. Sometimes these are supplied in installments and complete sets are not provided. The textbooks provided have not been revised since long especially in case of social sciences. There are schools, which do not have Science, Math and Language kits. The textbooks / curriculum at Elementary Level is not local specific and related to the needs of the child. Curriculum needs immediate renewal as per the national curriculum frame work 2005. The J&K government has taken steps like constitution of state core group for pedagogy and subgroups for curriculum renewal, textbook revision etc. But a lot has to be done in this regard to think over existing curriculum to make it local specific, problem solving and related with real life situations.

Teachers are not ready to adopt new pedagogy of teaching and they resort to lame excuses i.e. poor background of children, non-cooperation of parents etc. Despite many various training

programmes, teachers do not apply the new teaching pedagogies in the classrooms and continue with old teacher-dominated Lecture methods in the classrooms. The teachers are also not following continuous comprehensive evaluation system by J&K Board of School Education. Weekly, fortnightly tests are not usually held, report cards are not prepared and question paper setting is not done as per question paper design.

The female literacy rate in the district is good but there are some pockets in the district where some more efforts are required for the education of girls. Some Zones of the district such as Dansal, Chowki Choura, some parts of Gandhi Nagar and Bhalwal where ST population especially Gujjars and Bakerwals reside, girls' education needs some more attention. The literacy rate of Gujjar and Bakerwals is also very low. Most of them belong to nomadic and migratory population. The areas likewise Zone Chowki Choura, Dansal, Bhalwal, Gandhi Nagar, Marh, Khour, Akhnoor etc. contain the spots where these people reside in winter and migrate to Kashmir in summer. There is a great demand of opening of Mobile Primary schools from the tribal community. (Department Of Elementary Education & Literacy, April, 2004)

6. Conclusion and Suggestions

Teachers are the pillars of education system. Qualitative training input leading to value addition amongst teachers is a way to enhance quality teaching learning process. Teacher training is a continuous process under SSA. Teachers have a broader role and crucial responsibility in achieving UEE. It is quite important to target the teachers. Unless the teachers prepare themselves to adopt the new teaching pedagogies, no improvement in the existing standard of education being imparted in our schools can be achieved. It is necessary that all the teachers teaching elementary classes be fully oriented under SSA. Teacher training

programmes for in service / freshly recruited / un-trained teachers should be regularly organized at district level. The main objective of the teacher training should be to improve the knowledge of teachers regarding curricular and co-curricular activities and to make teaching learning process more effective, joyful and interesting.

The existing monitoring mechanism needs to be streamlined and for this purpose, zonal level teams should be constituted which can monitor and supervise the activities of the clusters.

There is need to orient community people for their participation as village education committees or school monitoring committees. The participation of community in the school management is low. No doubt VECs / SMCs / PTAs (parent-teacher association) stands constituted but their functioning is not appropriate as they are not fully aware about the role to be performed. Training of VEC members/community leaders need to be organized at Zonal level (Both Residential and Non Residential). Besides, monthly meeting of VECs/ SMCs/ PTAs should be conducted with the objective to streamline the relation between VECs and the school teachers. A fixed schedule need to be framed at district level under the supervision of Chairman SSA to hold meetings at School level on monthly basis in order to discuss various issues for effective implementation of SSA.

Traditional pedagogy with centrally designed textbooks and traditional teachers, mono-grade, chalk and talk methods etc. needs proper attention. There is a big gap between what is needed in the classroom for effective teaching learning processes and what is done there. It fails

to do justice to the children's background, their learning processes, pace of learning, importance of local learning resources, activity based learning, community's participation in school development and importance of peer collaboration in learning, etc. needs to be strengthened.

It is essential to create learning environment in the school by making necessary arrangements through availability of wide range of contextual teaching learning materials using local resources, operationalization of active pedagogy that promotes active participation of each child in the learning process, effective learning assessment and overall learning enhancement.

References

- 1st Half Yearly Monitoring Report of Department of Lifelong Learning university of Jammu on SSA and MDMS for the State of Jammu and Kashmir (Jammu district) for the period of 1st October 2010 to 31st March 2011, MHRD, GOI
- Annual Work Plan and Budget of SSA Jammu District 2011-2012
- A DfID-GOI Project Report on Education Sector in Jammu and Kashmir State (2008), Jammu & Kashmir Institute of Management, Public Administration & Rural Development, J&K government
- Census 2011, Government of India
- Human Resource Development 2000. A Report by Ministry of Human Resource Development on Assessment of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan in India. New Delhi: Human Resource Development. Fourth joint Review Mission on Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan 2006. From <[http:// www.ssa.nic.in](http://www.ssa.nic.in)> (Retrieved June 10, 2013)
- (2004). Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan - a programme for universal elementary education. *Manual for Planning and Appraisal*, Ministry of Human Resource Development, Department Of Elementary Education & Literacy.